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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SP](#) [AF](#)  
SUBJECT: SPANISH MOD POLDIR ON NCIS/OSI RESOLUTION,  
PROGRESS IN AFGHANISTAN, KOSOVO

Classified By: DCM Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Secretary General for Defense Policy Luis Cuesta told DCM on April 18 that MOD appreciates US patience with its plans for signature and announcement on April 24 of regulations for the activities in Spain of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) and USAF Office of Special Investigations (OSI). He said that Defense Minister Alonso wanted to personally announce the regulations at his next press conference so that he would clearly take responsibility for the issue and control the story rather than have it leak out. Cuesta said that he was relatively optimistic about Afghanistan after his recent trip there. He expects Spain's military training teams to be in Afghanistan in June. Cuesta said that Spain supports the EU's push for a new UNSCR for Kosovo and expressed appreciation for US efforts with Serbia. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) NCIS/OSI: Cuesta told DCM that MOD will sign and announce the NCIS/OSI regulations on April 24. He noted the sensitive political context of the ever-present CIA flights issue and previous negative press coverage of NCIS itself in explaining why Minister Alonso had decided to personally announce the regulations at his upcoming press conference. Cuesta said that it is better for Alonso to publicly address the issue and control the story rather than have it leak out. DCM reminded Cuesta that NCIS/OSI agents have been confined to base for more than a year during negotiation of the regulations, and that it is important for them to get back to work as soon as possible.

¶3. (C) AFGHANISTAN: After visiting Kabul and the Spanish co-led Forward Support Base at Herat, Cuesta said that he sees signs of progress in Afghanistan. He said that ISAF Commander General McNeil is an impressive strategic military practitioner who understands the importance of coordinating the security, military training, development, political, and other aspects of a mission like ISAF. Cuesta said that McNeil had praised the organization and civil-military coordination of the Spanish PRT in Qal-i-Naw. Cuesta said that he saw tangible improvements in the quality of life of the people in the Herat area, noting the direct impact of the new road that Spain had built as well as newly arrived running water and electricity. DCM said that it was ISAF's multi-faceted approach that differentiated it from the failed Soviet invasion and pointed to the success of Operation Achilles. Cuesta said that Spanish troops had participated in Achilles and that he anticipated another similar operation soon to knock the wind out of the Taliban before it could start its own spring offensive.

¶4. (C) Reflecting his background in development, Cuesta insisted that the key to lasting success of the ISAF mission was building capacity among the Afghan people. He emphasized

that Spain was focused on not only delivering tangible aid but in ensuring that the local government would be able to maintain this new infrastructure in the future. Cuesta said that the military training teams, which would eventually enable the Afghan government to take over security, fit this profile, and that Spanish training teams should be expected in Afghanistan in June. He said that the two teams would include about 30 people total and would each train one battalion. Cuesta said that deployment of the teams was pending only President Zapatero's likely approval, and that, while Minister Alonso would inform Congress, explicit Congressional approval would be unnecessary. Cuesta said that because Badghis province had no presence of Afghan security forces, he had secured approval of the GOS and the Afghan government to train and equip an additional company of new Afghan troops for the province. He said that the Afghan government would select and pay the soldiers, but Spain would provide everything that they needed.

15. (C) KOSOVO: Cuesta said that Spain supports EU efforts to get a new UNSC resolution for Kosovo, but added that in the absence of a new resolution, Spain would be "highly likely" to withdraw its troops. He emphasized that would be a worst case scenario that Spain was working to avoid and that the Spanish troops would not withdraw precipitously. DCM made the case for supporting the Ahtisaari plan to move forward in Kosovo and reiterated that Kosovo is a unique case that doesn't set a precedent and does demand a unique solution. Cuesta said that Russia probably can be convinced over time to at least not veto a new UNSC resolution, and he expressed appreciation for US efforts to reach out to Serbia. Aguirre